

Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking are significant problems affecting women and girls throughout our country. In the United States alone, approximately two million women are physically or sexually assaulted or stalked by an intimate partner every year. One out of every six women has experienced an attempted or completed rape at some point in her lifetime, and one in four women in the US will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. Around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused during her lifetime. And, young women 16 to 24 years old are now experiencing the highest rates of intimate partner violence.

Studies demonstrate that up to one half of these women will lose their jobs in the aftermath of the crime. Victims of gender-based violence experience higher rates of depression, anxiety disorders, and mental illnesses, addiction, eating disorders, suicide and self-esteem problems than non-victims. Total costs to our economy of rape and sexual assault are estimated to be \$127 billion a year in the United States, including loss of productivity, medical and mental health care, police and fire services, social/victim services, and quality of life issues.

For 15 years, the Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) has saved lives and helped millions of victims find safety, security and self-sufficiency. Since VAWA's enactment in 1994, cases of domestic violence have fallen and over one million women have used the justice system to obtain protective orders against their batterers. In September 2009, Louise sponsored a H.Res. 738, a resolution to recognize the accomplishments in the ongoing fight against domestic violence since the signing of VAWA in 1994 while also recognizing the immense amount of work left to do.

Congress has a responsibility to ensure that rape prevention programs are fully funded, that law enforcement has resources, that battered women shelters are open, and that victim advocates have the training to stop violence against women.

Rep. Slaughter was an original co-author of the first VAWA in 1994, and she has been a cosponsor of subsequent VAWA reauthorizations each year.

Louise led the fight to include two critical provisions in the House passed Affordable Health Care for America Act, H.R. 3962, mandating that domestic violence no longer be considered a preexisting condition and requiring brief counseling as a part of the essential benefits package.

Studies recently released have shown that a two minute screening of domestic violence victims in yearly checkups with their primary care physician can save nearly \$6 billion in chronic health care costs each year.